

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT PRETORIA 06592 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN
DAR ES SALAAM LAGOS GABORONE LONDON LUSAKA MAPUTO OTTAWA PARIS
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QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 6592

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, SA, SF

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: DETAILS OF CONTACT GROUP'S SECOND
MEETING WITH SAG

REF: PRETORIA 6590

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE CONTACT GROUP'S MEETING
WITH BRAND FOURIE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (DECEMBER 2), WAS
PREPARED BY THE UK EMBASSY AND AMENDED AND APPROVED BY
THE REST OF THE GROUP TODAY. A SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR
POINTS OF THE DISCUSSION WITH FOURIE WAS PROVIDED IN REFTEL.

1. THE GROUP SAW FOURIE AGAIN FOR 90 MINUTES
YESTERDAY EVENING. BOTHA WAS ABSENT. FOURIE SAID
THAT THEY HAD BRIEFED VORSTER ON OUR MORNING DIS-
CUSSIONS. VORSTER HAD SAID LITTLE, BUT HAD DRAWN
HIMSELF UP WITH A START WHEN THE FIGURE OF 2,000 UN
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MILITARY PERSONNEL WAS MENTIONED. FOURIE SAID THIS
SHOWED THAT HIS PREDICTIONS HAD BEEN ACCURATE. THE
SOUTH AFRICANS COULD NOT ACCEPT OUR PROPOSALS. THEY
CONSIDERED THAT A LARGE UN MILITARY CONTINGENT WOULD
BE BIASED IN SWAPO'S FAVOR. THAT WAS CERTAINLY A
STRONGLY HELD VIEW IN NAMIBIA. HE HIMSELF WAS RE-
LUCTANT TO "CHUCK IN THE TOWEL", AND HE HAD THEREFORE

SUGGESTED HOLDING ANOTHER INFORMAL MEETING WITH US AT WHICH HE COULD PUT TO US SOME QUESTIONS AND IDEAS WHICH HAD ARISEN FROM A MEETING WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT AFTERNOON.

2. IT TOOK SOME TIME FOR FOURIE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HE HAD IN MIND, AND WE CANNOT BE SURE THAT WHAT FOLLOWS FULLY REFLECTS HIS IDEAS. HE SAID THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD ALREADY AGREED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF UN MILITARY OBSERVER TEAMS WHOSE DUTIES WOULD BE TO MONITOR SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL AND BASES, AND MORE GENERALLY TO MONITOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY HAD ONLY AGREED WITH RELUCTANCE, AND IF THEY WERE TO BE ASKED TO CONSIDER AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UN MILITARY PERSONNEL, THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE TOLD THAT NEW TASKS HAD BEEN DISCOVERED WHICH REQUIRED SUCH AN INCREASE. WE REMINDED THEM THAT THE OBSERVER TEAM CONCEPT WAS THEIR PROPOSAL AND THAT THEY HAD NEVER SPECIFIED THE NUMBERS THEY HAD IN MIND.

3. FOURIE SUGGESTED THAT 3 OR 4 SPECIAL UN MILITARY CONTINGENTS MIGHT PATROL BORDER AREAS OF 50-60 KILOMETERS IN LENGTH, AND GUARD AGAINST INFILTRATION ACROSS THE BORDER. THERE WERE MIDDLE EAST PRECEDENTS FOR THIS. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, HE SAID THAT THE AREA OF OPERATION OF THESE CONTINGENTS

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WOULD HAVE TO BE LIMITED BECAUSE JUST AS THE UN WAS AFRAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY MIGHT INFLUENCE THE ELECTIONS, SO THE UN WAS WIDELY BELIEVED IN NAMIBIA TO BE PRO SWAPO. SOUTH AFRICAN LIAISON OFFICERS WOULD BE ATTACHED TO THE UN CONTINGENTS. IT WAS LEFT UNCLEAR WHETHER THESE CONTINGENTS WOULD HAVE AS THEIR HEADQUARTERS SOME OF THE SEVEN EXISTING OF PLATOON STRENGTH.

4. FOURIE SAID THAT THE MILITARY WOULD INSIST UPON RETAINING THESE BORDER BASES. HE GAVE TWO REASONS. FIRST, THE MILITARY WERE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE EXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT IN THESE BASES. THEY WOULD FORMALLY TRANSFER IT TO THE COMMANDER OF THE NEW NAMIBIAN ARMY UPON INDEPENDENCE, AND WRITE IT OFF IN THEIR ACCOUNTS. BUT THEY WOULD BE IN TROUBLE IF THEY TRANSFERRED NOW TO CIVILIAN AND/OR UN MILITARY CONTROL. SWAPO MIGHT COME AND REMOVE IT. WE SAID IT WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION THAT PROPERTY UNDER UN PROTECTION WOULD BE TAMPERED WITH, AND WE ASKED WHY SOUTH AFRICAN CIVILIANS COULD NOT LOOK AFTER IT. FOURIE SAID THAT NO CIVILIAN WOULD BE PREPARED TO LIVE

IN THE BORDER AREA WITHOUT SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY PROTECTION. EVEN IF CONDITIONS OF VISIBLE PEACE EMERGED FOLLOWING A CEASEFIRE, IT WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME BEFORE CIVILIANS WERE WILLING TO VENTURE BACK.

5. FOURIE'S SECOND REASON FOR RETAINING A PLATOON IN EACH OF SEVEN BASES WAS THAT IF THEY SITUATION WERE TO DETERIORATE, THE PLATOON COULD HOLD OUT LONG ENOUGH FOR REINFORCEMENTS TO ARRIVE. WE COMMENTED THAT THAT WAS PRECISELY WHAT MANY AT THE UNITED NATIONS FEARED.

6. FOURIE INDICATED THAT THERE MIGHT BE WAYS
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OF REDUCING (THOUGH PROBABLY NOT BY MUCH) SOUTH AFRICA'S LATEST FIGURE OF 4,000 MILITARY PERSONNEL. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY HAD BEEN ASKED TO REVIEW THE SIZE OF THEIR LOGISTIC REQUIREMENTS. HE ASKED WHY THE UN FORCES COULD NOT HAVE A CIVILIAN BACK-UP SINCE THAT WAS WHAT WE WERE PROPOSING FOR THE SOUTH AFRICANS. HE WAS ADAMANT THAT IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THE SOUTH AFRICANS AGREE TO THE FIGURE OF 1500. AT FIRST HE WAS EQUALLY POSITIVE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD NOT ACCEPT A UN MILITARY CONTINGENT IN NAMIBIA TOTALLING 2000. HE MADE VAGUE REFERENCES, HOWEVER, TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT BY STATIONING UN MILITARY PERSONNEL ON THE ANGOLAN SIDE OF THE BORDER, THE TOTAL FIGURE MIGHT BE BROUGHT UP TO 2000. WE REPLIED THAT WE HAD ALWAYS ENVISAGED THAT ANY UN OBSERVERS STATIONED IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WOULD BE ADDITIONAL TO THE 2000 WE HAD PROPOSED FOR NAMIBIA.

7. WE TOLD FOURIE THAT SOME OF HIS SUGGESTIONS

COULD BE ACCOMMODATED. WE SAW NO BASIC DIFFICULTY OVER ATTACHING SOUTH AFRICAN LIAISON OFFICERS TO UN MILITARY CONTINGENTS. AS FOR RESTRICTING THE AREA OF OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED BORDER CONTINGENTS, WE HAD ALWAYS ASSUMED THAT THE UN MIGHT WANT TO ALLOCATE SPECIFIC AREAS TO SPECIFIC GROUPS OF UN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS MONITORING DUTIES. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, HAVE TO EXAMINE THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS CAREFULLY. IN ANY CASE, FOURIE'S OTHER PROPOSALS LACKED CREDIBILITY. SOUTH AFRICA WAS STILL INSISTING UPON THE RETENTION OF THE BORDER BASES. IT WAS ALSO ADAMANT THAT THE SIZE OF THE UN FORCE MUST NOT EXCEED THAT OF THE RESIDUAL SOUTH
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AFRICAN CONTINGENT. WE HAD ACCEPTED THAT THERE WERE ARGUMENTS FOR RETAINING A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT, BUT PSYCHOLOGICALLY IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO SELL THIS AT THE UN UNLESS THE UN MILITARY CONTINGENT WAS LARGER. MOREOVER, THE COMMANDOS AND CITIZEN FORCES WERE, IN PRACTICE, AVAILABLE FOR DUTY, EVEN IF THEIR COMMAND STRUCTURE WAS DISMANTLED. FOURIE SAID THAT THEY COULD ONLY BE MOBILIZED BY ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.

8. IN REPLY TO OUR COMMENTS, FOURIE SAID THAT THERE WAS A GROWING FEELING THAT NOTHING WOULD SATISFY THE UN, AND THAT WE WERE STRINGING SOUTH AFRICA ALONG. AFTER HIS ELECTION VICTORY, VORSTER WAS NOT PREPARED TO BE PUSHED AROUND, AND HE DID NOT WANT TO BE ACCUSED OF SELLING OUT. SOUTH AFRICA HAD GIVEN AS MUCH AS IT COULD, AND HE WAS NOW TRYING "TO GIVE A LITTLE MORE." THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR DISTRUSTING SOUTH AFRICA'S PROPOSALS, SINCE IT WAS EVIDENT THAT ONCE THE UN PRESENCE HAD BEEN INSTALLED, SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES COULD NOT RE-ENTER THE TERRITORY WITHOUT PUTTING THEMSELVES WHOLLY IN THE WRONG INTERNATIONALLY.

9. FOURIE SAID THAT IF WE SAW ANY MERIT IN HIS IDEAS HE WAS PREPARED TO SADDLE THE HORSE: BUT IT MIGHT BUCK LATER ON. HE DID NOT WANT TO CARRY MATTERS TOO FAR WITH OTHER MINISTRIES IF AT THE END OF THE DAY WE SAW NO WAY OF REACHING AGREEMENT. WE REPLIED THAT WE HAD NOT COME TO PRETORIA IN A TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT SPIRIT, AND THAT WE NEEDED SOUTH AFRICA'S PRECISE REACTIONS TO OUR IDEAS. WE WOULD THEREFORE LIKE FOURIE TO DEVELOP HIS IDEAS ABOUT BORDER CONTINGENTS, ESPECIALLY AS ONE OF THE TASKS WE HAD ALWAYS ENVISAGED FOR UN MILITARY PERSONNEL WAS THAT OF MONITORING THE BORDER. WE ALSO TOLD HIM THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO CONVINCE THE NAMIBIANS THAT, HOW-
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EVER PARTIAL UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS MIGHT BE-, A UN MILITARY CONTINGENT WOULD BE AS IMPARTIAL IN NAMIBIA AS SIMILAR CONTINGENTS HAD BEEN ELSEWHERE.

10. THERE IS TO BE A FORMAL MEETING WITH BOTHA AND FOURIE THIS AFTERNOON, WHICH MAY THEN BE FOLLOWED BY A MEETING AT VORSTER'S HOUSE. BOWDLER.

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER.

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